


NORTH KARELIA UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES
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DEVELOPMENT OF AN AFTER SALES CENTRE
Case: KESLA Oyj.

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<p>Title Development of an after sales centre Case: Kesla Oyj</p>	
<p>Abstract</p> <p>This study is based on a commissioned research for KESLA OYJ. KESLA is a forest machine manufacturer that markets its products in about 30 countries around the world. KESLA currently offers customer service in Kesälahti and in Joensuu. Most of the after sales products such as spares are produced and warehoused in Kesälahti. The aim of this study was to investigate whether establishing a service centre would be the solution to improve the delivery of after sales service. The project required the author to identify the advantages and disadvantages of moving spare parts from one Kesla facility to the other; i.e. from Kesälahti to Joensuu. In addition, the project was expected to scan the environment for better ideas how to improve on after sales service.</p> <p>The theoretical framework supports the study by linking the concept of customer service to the subject matter. This study was a qualitative study and was conducted as a case study. The data collection was done by interviewing the representatives of the case company and selected dealers of the company. The dealers were approached through a quantitative method, but allowing them to express their opinions in a qualitative manner.</p> <p>The findings revealed that the after sales service could be further improved, if spare parts are centralised in Joensuu due to nearness to transport routes. However, the management of a centralised store would require an increase in service personnel as well as expanding the present store to create more space for the spares. It was also uncovered that information about products could be shared via an extranet environment with access codes provided to dealers and customers. Through this environment customers will place orders, see service information such as training materials, repair instructions and contribute to product development.</p> <p>The main conclusions of this study are that moving parts from Kesälahti to Joensuu would require more resources. However, the customer response time will be reduced. The medium for distributing information need to be improved, for example setting up an extranet environment that customer will be able to have access to.</p>	
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<p>Tiivistelmä</p> <p>Tämä tutkimus on toteutettu KESLA OYJ:n toimeksiannosta. KESLA on metsäkoneiden valmistaja, joka myy koneitaan noin 30 eri maassa ympäri maailmaa. Asiakaspalveluja KESLA tarjoaa tällä hetkellä Kesälahdella ja Joensuussa. Myynnin jälkeen tarjottavista tuotteista suurin osa tuotetaan ja varastoidaan Kesälahdella. Tämän tutkimuksen tavoitteena oli löytää ratkaisuja KESLA:n toimitus, huolto ja varaosatoimituksen kehittämiseen ja arvioida palvelukeskuksen perustamisen hyötyä. Projektin aikana tarkasteltiin KESLA:n varaosatoimitusta Kesälahdelta Joensuuhun, sekä KESLA:n toimintaympäristöä, tarkoituksena löytää ideoita KESLA:n huolto- ja varaosapalveluiden kehittämiseen.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen teoreettisena viitekehyksenä käytetty asiakaspalvelukonsepti tukee tutkimusta yhdistäen teoria tutkittuun aiheeseen. Tutkimus on metodiltaan laadullinen ja se on toteutettu tapaustutkimuksena. Tutkimusaineisto kerättiin haastattelemalla KESLA:n edustajia ja tutkimukseen valittujen KESLA:n jälleenmyyjien edustajia. Osaa jälleenmyyjistä pyydettiin vastaamaan kyselylomakkeeseen, antaen heille kuitenkin mahdollisuuden kertoa mielipiteitään laadullista tutkimusta vastaavalla tavalla.</p> <p>Tulosten perusteella huolto- ja varaosapalveluiden tuottamista voitaisiin kehittää pidemmälle, jos varaosat olisivat keskitetty Joensuuhun, joka sijaitsee lähempänä liikenneväyliä. Keskitetyn myymälän perustaminen kuitenkin vaatisi palveluhenkilökunnan lisäystä, sekä nykyisen myymälätilan laajennusta vaadittavalle varastolle. Kävi myös ilmi, että jälleenmyyjille ja asiakkaille tarkoitettu extranet olisi toimiva keino jakaa tuotetietoa. Extranetin avulla asiakkaat voisivat tehdä tilauksia, etsiä huoltotietoa kuten koulutusmateriaaleja ja korjausohjeita ja mahdollisuuden osallistua tuotekehittelyyn.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen tärkeimmät johtopäätelmät ovat, että varaosien siirtäminen Kesälahdelta Joensuuhun vaatisi lisäresursseja, mutta tällä investoinnilla tavarantoimitusaika asiakkaille lyhenisi. Tiedonjakamisympäristöä olisi parannettava, esimerkiksi asiakkaille perustettavan extranetin avulla.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Manufacturing companies have today experienced the significance of customer service. They no longer concentrate only on core products as a method of competitive advantage, but they include a set of services which were before neglected and looked upon as not being part of their businesses. Companies face different challenges to deliver effective customer service. These challenges include the ability to determine what the customer wants as an additional service, how customers could be better served to maintain the trust promised to them, and most importantly how to manage customers after a sales process push firms to constantly search for solutions. A company willing to enhance its customer relationship has to develop strategies based on the perceptions of customers. Businesses which have taken service management as a priority are mostly found in the developed world. Finland belongs to this part of the world, and most of the biggest machine manufacturers in Finland are deep into the practices of service business. One of the Finnish biggest machine manufacturers, KESLA OYJ faces similar challenges in delivering effective customer service. However, KESLA OYJ has departments specifically for customer service, with 14 service personnel to boost the service sector of the company. Regardless of the effort given to this department, additional improvement is still warranted (Kesla, 2010).

KESLA OYJ is a company that specialises in the design, manufacture and marketing of forest technology and with a complete mastery of timber harvesting production line. The KESLA product family consists of a timber loading cranes, harvester cranes, forwarder cranes, industrial cranes, logging trailers, wood chippers, harvester heads, stroke delimbers and stroke processors. KESLA has production units in Joensuu, Kesälahti, Ilomantsi and Tohmajärvi in the Eastern part of Finland. The company was created about fifty years ago and are exporting today to more than 30 countries around the world (Kesla, 2010).

KESLA OYJ produces machines which constantly require servicing, repairs and the replacement of parts when they are obsolete. Most of the machines are computer systems that require training the customer on how to operate them. Consequently, a facility has to be created for improving the conditions under which the activity has been previously

conducted. Although customer service has been a substantial part of KESLA's business, the sector still needs improvements to meet changes taking place in the technological and competitive business environment.

1.2 Aim of the study

KESLA OYJ believes that the customer service department could be improved by developing an after sales centre in its main facility in Joensuu whereby all products, especially spare parts will be centralised. The purpose of this study is to investigate whether establishing a service centre would be the solution to improve the delivery of after sales service. The project requires the moving of the spare parts department from Kesälahti to Joensuu and the subsequent upgrading of the centre into a modern facility that would meet the demands of customer expectations and convenient service delivery. According to KESLA, the centre is expected to have the following characteristics: a space for customer service, a space for spare parts, and a space for training dealers and employees. Customers constantly visit the KESLA factory for several reasons; therefore KESLA envisaged animating the after sales centre with collateral materials (Spin-off products), demo devices and some control systems. To effectively establish this centre, the participation of a wide spectrum of stakeholders is required. The stakeholders include among others; customers, dealers, and KESLA employees.

Although KESLA has production units in four different towns in Finland, only two of them are connected to this study, Kesälahti and Joensuu. The connection relates to a plan to move the spare parts store from Kesälahti to a subsequent new store in Joensuu with the aim of better management in a centralised place. Products manufactured in Joensuu have separate service and service personnel from those produced in Kesälahti, but neither of these production facilities have an actual after sales centre. However, there are customer service personnel responsible for customer contact depending on the product and where the product is produced. KESLA foresees that its service business could be better managed if after sales service is centralised.

The complex nature of KESLA's products requires training for dealers as well as end users. The training is usually organised a couple of times a year because of the difficulty in travelling to all partners around the world. The training takes place at a partner or KESLA premises. Usually, training has mostly been given to domestic customers.

However, KESLA employees travel sometimes to partners abroad to train them when necessary.

The after sales delivery begins with production, where machines are manufactured alongside spare parts. The company makes machines and spare parts, deliver to a dealer or end customer as indicated on Figure 1. Other services are also produced the same time like warranties (Figure 2) while some which are predominantly taken care of when a purchase has been effectively delivered.

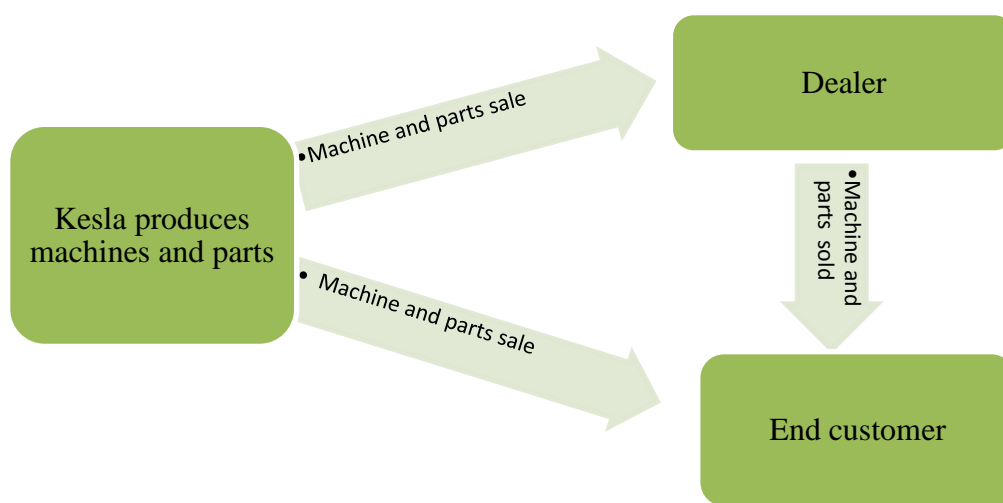


Figure 1: Product delivery

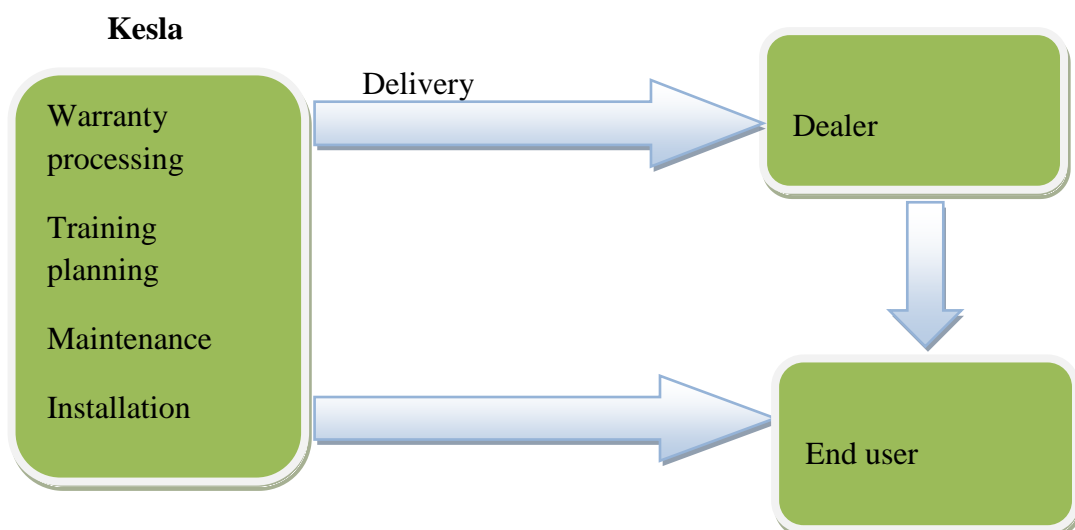


Figure 2: Service delivery

1.3 Research question

The empirical part of the study in chapters 3 and 4 deal with the major question and some other sub-questions: The main research question is: What kind of customer service centre should KESLA have?

The sub-questions are:

- How should KESLA'S sales center be designed in order to improve the brand name and its image?
- How can KESLA develop its after sales center into a modern facility?
- What potential attributes could be included to change the present outlook?

1.4 Benefits of the research

The benefits of the study can be viewed in two dimensions. First, the project owner would be able to solve a problem with whatever solution that comes from this research. It seems that KESLA has enough solutions to the problems they are having with the customer service sector. The ideas are scattered and need a chronological approach to confront them. A research of this nature extends to the external environment where more ideas and opinions add value in shaping the already existing solution. It gives a sense of direction with many examples that would be drawn from scanning the environment.

Secondly, customers, dealers and partners will continue to receive quality service. The aim of improving a system that serves the interest of a third party is to create a mutual understanding that impacts both sides. Therefore, the benefits for KESLA to improve its service business are seen to have effects on both customers and KESLA itself. An after sales service mainly renders a customer satisfied. However, the kind of service the customer receives, determines the level of satisfaction. The level of satisfaction, therefore decides whether the customer stays with the present seller or switches to a competitor. This analysis agree with the views of Rigopoulou, Chaniotakis, Lymperopoulos & Siomkos (2008) who wrote that; service quality has been rightly treated as one reliable vehicle for gaining sustainable competitive advantage, which means that service quality aspects possess a substantial strategic role for companies.

2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study belongs to the field of customer service. After a concise definition of customer service as the central concept of the study, the theory of after sales service is examined followed by its characteristics. The concept of after sales service is examined on the bases of after sales activity in the manufacturing industry. The customer service function in the manufacturing companies is different from what takes place within service companies. Therefore, what is found in the literature on this paper is best suited for companies producing machines and other manufactured products.

2.1 Customer service

Goffin & New (2001-276) define customer service as the way a customer is handled; “before, during and after a purchase. After sales service is a part of customer service, that is the way in which a customer is handled after the sale transaction”. Other writers of seller-buyer relationship describe customer service as; the provision of services to customers, before, during and after a purchase, which are activities designed to enhance the level of customer satisfaction- that is the feeling that a product has met the customer’s expectation. Customer service embodies all activities involved in the design, production and delivery of a product. The overall objective here is to develop and apply strategies that can satisfy and retain the end customers. It suffices to say that the phrase after a purchase which forms the bases of this research is like one fourth the study of customer service.

The theory of customer service coincides with the theory of supply chain management. According to Les Galloway et al. (2005), supply chain management is the process of managing the entire chain of raw material supply, manufacture, assembly, and distribution to the end customer. This also involves the supplier quality assurance, the supplier and the buyer working together from the start to the end in order to achieve mutually set goals.

The supply chain management definition of the customer-supplier relationship however, might well apply in internal service management. If this concept is linked to external partners (customers), one acknowledges the role played by them in the efficient management of customer service. Waters (2002, 553) asserts that an efficient supply

chain leads to a superior customer service by explaining the significance of logistics in reducing cost. Why should logistics reduce cost when we are talking about after sales services? When referring to tangible goods Rigopoulou et al. (2008), states that they are mostly seen as operative activities of some or all members of the distribution chain. Services such as the transport/delivery to clients, the installation, the product-related training, the hotline and advice from the help desk, any repair services and even the recycling processes are considered here. Following the constituents of tangible goods, transport and delivery to clients is a part of the after sales action, although in theory, nevertheless, it contributes to customer satisfaction. Figure 3 illustrates the relationship between customer service and supply chain management.

Companies create demand derived from information contracted from the field. They develop communication flow in a way that both the customer and the material supply departments stay in close contact. How communication in supply chain management relates to customer service is the Just-in-time (JIT) concept. This strategy benefits the producer in that they respond to customer's need without extra work or inventory and the customer obtain the goods at the right time; in this case time serves as a value adding instrument (Mertanen 2010). The value of a product, which is actually what customers buy, contains interrelated generic activities as pointed by Porter (cited in quickMBA 2010), in his value chain analysis: service activities are those that maintain and enhance the product's value including customer support, repair services, etc.

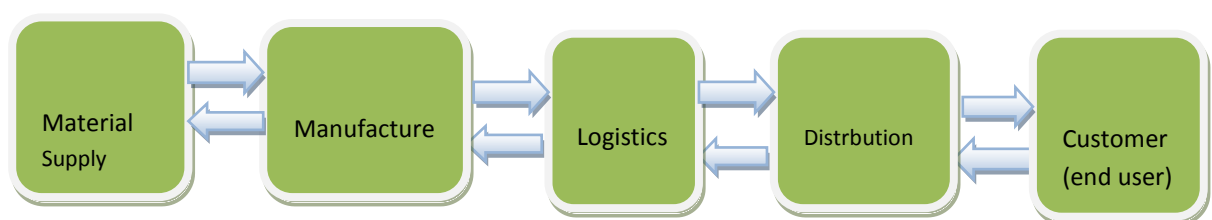


Figure 3: Information flow for efficient customer satisfaction

Some after sales theorist (cf. Loomba & Arvinder 1996) argue that the more manufacturer increases the number of distribution channels (intermediaries) to get the products to the end-user, the less control the manufacturer can exercise over the flow of products through the distribution channel. As the number of channel intermediaries in a distribution environment increases, a product manufacturer's ability to influence the product prices and after-sales service support attributes to the end-user generally tends to

decrease (Loomba & Arvinder, 1996). In practical terms, this construct does not seem to diminish manufacturer-customer contact. Warranty terms which pass through the dealer to customer are managed by the manufacturer and all contacts of warranty claims are covered by the producer. How then can the relationship decrease when training activities and other after sales advices come from the producer? Nowadays, the customer wants to listen more from producer than to seller because they would believe that the manufacturer can provide them with firsthand knowledge about the product more so than the dealer who just sells. If there is a trade-off between dealer and consumer by the manufacturer to shrink after sales activities, there will come a time when relationship can break.

Experience from service managers indicate that customers constantly call to producers to get information despite all they have done to let them obtain necessary advice from dealers (Raakkunainen & Ropponen 2010). If situations in this nature occur, one can conclude that there is an urgent need for companies to redefine their attitudes towards how they should stay in close relation with consumers. Some service representatives respond to the customers; nevertheless, the representative is not happy providing a service that is not his responsibility. A concise discussion on how companies could redesign customer service is handled in the proceeding chapters.

2.2 After sales service

The term after sales service has been approached in the literature under one broad perspective. It refers to tangible goods which are mostly seen as operative activities of some or all members of the distribution chain. The term after sales service describes those services provided to the customer after a product has been delivered. Although sometimes it could also be said that after sales service starts when a product has been purchased. This is because the only activity left after a purchase is to deliver the product and delivery constitutes one of the constituents of after sales services. The constituents of after sales service are the way in which a customer is handled after the sale transaction. The same services are sometimes also called field services when they are embodied in the main characteristics that are located at a customer's site (Rigopoulou et al. 2008), others refer to them as customer support. As indicated by Goffin & New (2001), good customer support is a prerequisite in achieving customer satisfaction; it can increase the success rate and new products and directly contribute to competitive advantage

The notion that enhancing the buyer-seller relationship and their mutual benefits for example, satisfaction and performance through the superior service quality dimension has

been widely recognised (Rigopoulou et al. 2008). Besides, service quality has been rightly treated as one reliable vehicle for gaining a sustainable competitive advantage, which means that service quality aspects possess a substantial strategic role for companies. Manufacturers and retailers of capital and consumer goods cannot consider their active role ends with a sale, but rather must provide their customers with a set of supporting after sales services, such as installation packages, technical advice for use, maintenance/repair, spare part delivery, product upgrading, etc. These services represent a significant opportunity for most manufacturers.

From an economic perspective, the after sales service market has been found in some industries to be up to four or five times larger than the product sales (Bundschuh and Dezvane, (2003) cited in Saccani et al. 2005). Similarly evidence was found by Wise & Baumgartner (1999) and Alexander et al. (2002) who state that after-sales may generate more than three times the turnover of the original purchase during a given product lifecycle, and often provides a profitability higher than product sales. Those companies that make customer relationship management a part of their business activity know that; delivering efficient after sales service is a superior operation for profitable growth. One sales manager indicated that, “we want to make our after sales centre looks like a modern facility” (Leppänen, 2010). This is to say that not much effort has been put into this sector. Notwithstanding, product features constantly change in conjunction with new techniques pushing manufacturers to change system service and bring the customer in line with the dynamics.

Since the market for after sales services continue to grow, especially for machine products, and generate more revenue than actual products, nearly all manufacturing companies including KESLA are vying to gain a competitive advantage. A modern facility according to Leppänen (2010) explains the integration of different services that would form a service package for after sales activities. The package includes standardized, predefined services such as spare parts, repair/maintenance, a hotline, inspection, and training as well as warranty services. Although some of these services are provided free to customers, customers might still bear additional costs such as paying for lodging if they visit company premises for training purposes. However, repairs and spare parts carry cost, because it serves as a different product portfolio (cf Grönroos 2007). This idea identifies with the views of Gebauer, Bravo-Sanchez & Fleisch (2008), who wrote that, after sales service providers focus on ensuring the functional capability of the

product for the period in which the customer uses the product. In the event of any breakdown or failure after sales services are offered to the customer. These services provide additional revenue to the companies from separate prices charged for repairs and sales of spare parts. Gebauer et al. (2008) further explain that profitable customers get preferential treatment in terms of warranty. After a warranty expires, a machine could still be serviced depending on the relationship they have built. Companies use this technique to retain customers since old customers are profitable than trying to find new ones.

2.3 Classification of after sales service

The above definition of after sales service omits the physical environment within the company where the after sales activity takes place. This place can be called an after sales centre. Literature covering after sales focus on warranty service, installation and repair as well as training, but the actual place where these services, particularly training of employees and customers could be organised is often neglected. Most customer service representatives do their work by telephone in call centres, some interact with customers by e-mail, fax, post, or face-to-face. The face-to-face interaction could be in a dealer's business premises or in the company's premises. In situations where companies offer after sales services on-site, they need to establish a facility to accommodate the activity especially training tools need to be arranged in a manner that shows professionalism and at the same time easy to coordinate. Therefore, an after sales centre can be identified as a place within the company where employees, customers and dealers can receive training. A manufacturing organisation such as KESLA, which has spare parts to demonstrate to its customers when they visit the factory, should allocate a place where the required services give the customer convenience and therefore will build a good image for the company's brand name. Companies often train their customers on-site. It is understood that the training activity could be organised in any place within the organisation, depending on any free space available. This is in situations where the company has not got a specific place to organise such training meetings. The desire to own a specific place for training activities is therefore driven by the inconvenience of changing from one room to the other. Sometimes it might be hard to find a free room because the rooms are also used for other purposes. (Kesla 2010.) After sales service can be classified into five

main categories, however, the classification holds with manufacturing companies than service companies.

- i) Installation
- ii) Warranty claims management
- iii) Maintenance/repair
- iv) Spare part delivery
- v) On-site and out-of-site (customer's site) training

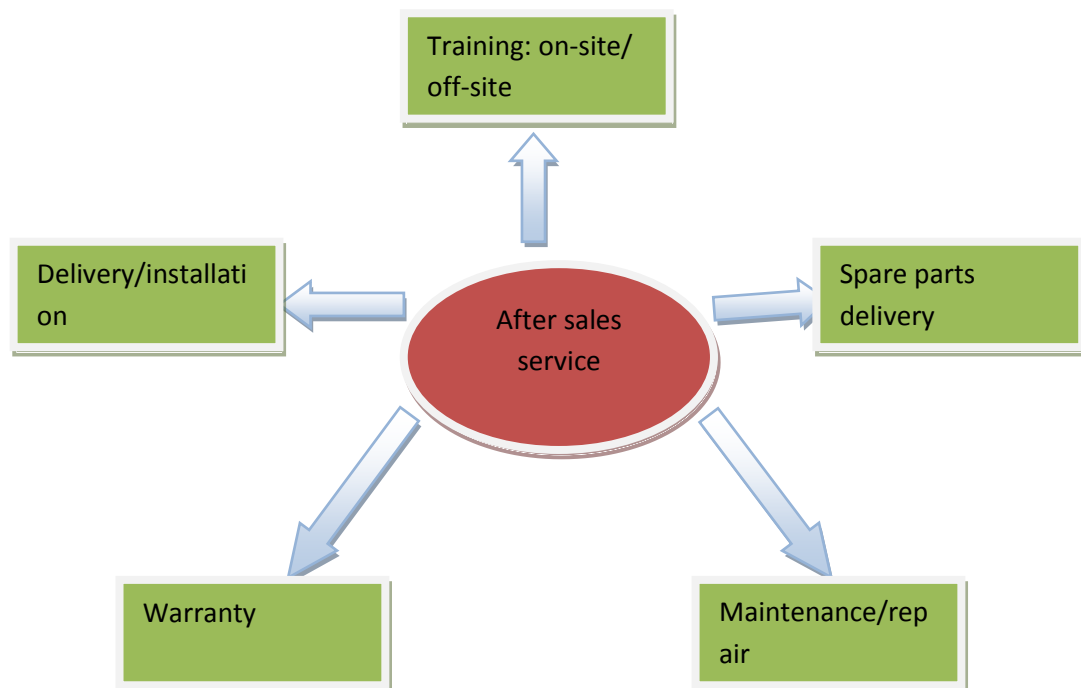


Figure 4: Classification of after sales delivery

When classifying customer service, it is vital to note when the activities commence. However, some manufacturing companies start considering service management into the product at the design stage (cf. Clark 1987), where delivery and installation programmes are integrated to form the after sales package. Figure 4 summarises the basic components of after sales activities of a manufacturing company. Figure 4 confirms however, the definition of the after sales concept, which states according to Rigopoulou et al. (2008), that they are mostly seen as operative activities of some or all members of the distribution chain. The changes in technology dynamics compel companies to upgrade service delivery to be able to sustain their positions in the competitive environment.

When new products are introduced, the necessity to train customers arises. Where, and how customers receive training remains a question to be answered. The analysis of customer training, according to Van Der Wagen (2008), training begins inside the companies; i.e. employees, particularly service providers must be trained so that they would be able to transmit the knowledge to customers. Internal training of service providers is an effective way to efficiently manage customers. The organisational aim of any customer service training program is linked to strategic and operational planning of the company (Van der Wagen 2008), and internal customers is the springboard to laying the foundation. If the process succeeds in meeting organisational goals, i.e. service providers receive up to date training about product information and they are tested to find out if the training activity has been successful, it would serve as a pre-success for quality customer service.

Grönroos (2007, 384) continues in his book *Service Management and Marketing* to stress the importance of internal marketing. Internal marketing is the ability of the firm to see its employees as a market where the services should first be marketed. He continues by outlining the challenges faced by manufacturers in a changing business environment relating to business-to-business markets. Some of these challenges are the creation of additional competitive advantages apart from the traditional ones- competing on core solutions to value added services, which is what is called service business. The following paragraphs explain the relationship that exists between efficient employee management and quality service delivery.

2.3.1 Delivery/ installation (primary delivery)

Goods and services have the tendency to move from the production unit to the distribution and consumption units. At the consumption unit, the user must assemble and install the product before using it; this demands knowledge of product usage. The knowledge has to be provided by the producer of the product, which is then delivered alongside the physical item. Therefore, delivery could be seen as a combination of physical distribution and service distribution. The two form a package that reaches the final consumer. The service distribution is seen here as assembly and installation manuals that would help the consumer set the product in motion. The first element of product support after the sale is installation. Products which require safety or they are complex the manufacturer do the installation in the first instance. This activity is

imperative for creating a competitive advantage in a company along with other competitive strategies because it leads to efficient customer satisfaction. Jobber (2010, 625), states that producing products that customers' wants, pricing them correctly and developing well-designed promotional plans are necessary but not sufficient conditions for customer satisfaction. The final part is distribution: the place element of the marketing mix. Products need to be available in adequate quantities, in convenient locations and at times when customers want to buy them.

For products to reach their final destinations at the right time and in the right quantities is the responsibility of an integrated function in the supply chain department. The responsibility starts in the planning phase of any product that has to be produced. Operations management thinkers write that customer satisfaction begins when an idea to produce a product is initiated. This view could be justified with the help of understanding the theory of supply-chain management. DuPont's director of logistics (Clifford Syre) defines supply-chain management as "it starts with the customer and ends with the customer" (Gattorna & Walters 1996). This implies that the customer is the key consideration in the production as well as the distribution process. However, the customer plays a vital role in providing the producer with information needed to process orders for delivery.

2.3.2 Spare part delivery and maintenance (secondary delivery)

Companies manufacture their products alongside spare parts, but the spare parts are not purchased the same time as the products. Because spare parts are purchased and delivered at a later time, the process becomes another business strategy. The business strategy is seen to be different as it differs from core products and services. Why is this so? Maintenance and replacing parts of a defective machine generate more revenue in a company than the core product itself. Although some companies believe that if the price of repairs and maintenance is bundled in the product price, it could be of value to the customers. Rothschild (1984) cited in Koskela (2002), affirms that after sales services include maintenance, repair and upgrading. If these services can be offered at a fixed or guaranteed rate, they could be a significant competitive advantage. In maintenance, it is to be remembered that one way of solving the repair problem is to have defect-free products and then service can be bundled into the product price, which can also be of strategic value (Koskela 2002).

After sales service surpass maintenance, repairs and delivery of spare parts. For the process to be efficient, manufacturers have taken the initiative to organise and implement the after sales activity in the design stage of production (cf. Koskela 2002). This orientation toward service business prepares the framework for sustainable management of the customer. The benefit to incorporate a service attitude before a final product is consumed reduces the workload of the manufacturer. Consequently, it is easier for the customer to receive up to date service.

Another significant factor that encourages the customer to maintain his relationship with a provider lies in the reliability of delivery. When a customer encounters a problem with his machine during usage, he expects the supplier to react immediately to fix the problem. Experience indicates that the problem can be fixed in a timely manner only when the supplier company had built a sustainable service culture in the company (cf. Grönroos 2007).

2.3.3 Training employees and customers (on-site and out-of-site)

It is beneficial for a company to train their customers on how to use the product and on how to apply it to their satisfaction. A training programme usually begins in the company itself. It starts with training employees so that they will further train dealers and customers. Employees within a company who are responsible for customer contact should understand how to deal with customer's problems. Training is required so that employees have the service-oriented perspective needed to cater for problems and also the knowledge required (Grönroos 2007).

Grönroos (2007) further terms employee training as part of internal marketing. The notion explains that employees are the first consumers of a firm's product. The more an internal marketing programme succeeds, the more external marketing activities will be effective. If employees are not empowered to deal with customer's problems and accept or appreciate the company's service-oriented approach they will not be motivated to perform their duties as external markers.

Furthermore, the training activity is a two sided approach. On the one hand is the training of employees and on the other hand is the training of customers. To transform the knowledge of a service strategy to quality customer service, firms must;

- Integrate a service-oriented programme in the company's corporate strategy.
- Create an attitude of service thinking among employees especially those responsible for customer contact.
- Develop communication with the help of IT-systems and make employees and customer get acquainted with the systems.

Training programmes have several goals: service providers need to know about the needs of the customer and how to build and maintain relationships. Another goal is that service providers or employees have to know how to present information to customer as well as serve them. When employees are equipped with all the necessary tools needed to confront the customer, the second step left is to transform the skills to create value for the customer. (Grönroos 2007.)

Firms do not only build a strong employee force, but they also care about how much the customer knows their products. Customer's needs are created by companies. To satisfy these needs the companies produce products based on the requirement of the user. The producer of a product is the one who knows the product and who knows how it functions. He is therefore the only one who can transfer the knowledge to a third party (Porokka 2010). A new machine requires some expertise to install before using. This happens mostly with equipments that have computerized systems. Consequently, firms take a more active role to provide its users with the knowhow of application. There are many ways firms teach the customer: for example organising training sessions in the company premises (on-site training) or training at customers site (out-of-site training).

2.3.4 Warranty management and claims

A warranty reimburses the purchaser in case the product does not perform its function. As indicated by Karim & Suzuki (2005), warranty is an agreement (contractual in nature) between the manufacturer and the consumer which require the former to fix all irregularities or failures occurring within the warranty period. The claim of warranty is therefore the compensation a customer gets when a machine fails to function within the warranty period. Purchasers have the right to claim for the compensation only if it was agreed in the sales contract. The guarantee given to the purchaser of a product is nowadays the most significant element of customer support. Manufacturers believe that extending the period of warranty reduces the financial risk of using the products (cf. Goffin & New 2001 and Goffin 1999). Manufacturers therefore offer consumers the

possibility to buy longer warranties. This is because support costs sometimes increase more than the original purchase price.

3 METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The study employs two methods of data collection. In addition to books and journals, the study relies on empirical data; as a result different analytical techniques are also used. The foundation of the research design was formulated from the nature of the main research question. The main research question was, “what kind of after sales centre should KESLA have”? This question sounded exploratory; i.e. little is known about the phenomenon, according to Kumar (2005, 8) that a small-scale study is undertaken to decide if it is worth conducting a detailed investigation. In sub-chapter 1.3, the benefits of the study are outlined explaining that KESLA has a number of solutions to the problem they have with effectively delivering quality customer service. However, the ideas are scattered and need a chronological approach to confront them.

The empirical data of this study was designed to be collected in two different forms; an unstructured interview targeted to KESLA employees and a questionnaire to dealers and private customers. See appendix 1&2. KESLA employees consisted of customer service personnel most of them managers. An unstructured interview provided the opportunity to interact with the interviewee during the process in a flexible way. Kumar (2005, 9) wrote that; “you may formulate questions and raise issues on the spur of the moment, depending on what occurs to you in the context of the discussion”. Lowe (2007) supported this view by explaining flexibility in unstructured interviews. Flexibility means here that the interview is semi-structured; where there are predetermined questions, however, the researcher is allowed to deviate from the questions. Because of flexibility and spontaneous jump in of the researcher to explain a question or ask another question, it is assumed that the rapport between researcher and informant will be enhanced. Burton, Brundrett & Jones (2008, 86) state in quote; “semi-structured interview is a more flexible style used to collect equivalent information. You will need to begin by identifying a number of key questions focusing on the theme of your study to act as prompt. Depending upon the response that you receive you will then ask further questions to pursue fruitful lines of enquiry in more detail or move on to the next key

question”. Furthermore, the corresponding understanding between the two will lead to in-depth and accurate information.

Another part of the empirical data collection relied on a questionnaire designed to customers and dealers. Since this research was meant to gather information on how customers think KESLA’s after sales centre should look like, and not to measure the level of customer satisfaction, it was hard to request quantitative data. Although a quantitative inquiry would serve to clarify features, require calculation and construct statistical models in an attempt to explain what is observed, (Wielderdom (2010), it was still useful in this research. Kumar (2005, 127), states that if potential respondents are scattered over a wide geographical area, there is no choice but to use a questionnaire. KESLA dealer and private customers are scattered in a wide geographical area, hence the reason why I choose a questionnaire to reach them. A sample of KESLA dealers and customers were selected to represent the entire population deemed sufficient to provide information that would be used to quantify the whole research solution. The questionnaire design formulated questions in an open-ended manner, which gave the possibility to analyse the information in a qualitative sense. This is not to say that the respondents were unwilling to provide qualitative information, but because the investigation required an exploratory approach.

3.1 Semi-structured and structure interviews

This part of the survey involved face-to-face interviews with customer service managers of KESLA both in the main branch in Joensuu and in the Kesälahti branch. The total number was four, including the CEO of KESLA. These persons were selected on the bases of their influence on customer service management since they have been servicing customers in this company for several years. The first interview conducted took a structured form. During this interview the managers were asked questions relating to the history of after sales activity, how they have conducted the activities before and what is the present situation. Furthermore, questions concerning the future prospects and how they see the future of after sales to develop were asked. I separated the questions into two parts with sub-sections; the first part dealt with spare parts sales development activity and the second section was service advice, warranty, and training functions (Appendix 1). This separation provided the opportunity to understand how the system functions and the

possible changes that could be made. Table 1 depicts a summary of the questions from the first part of the survey.

Table 1: Category of questions to KESLA personnel

Spare part sales development activity	Service advice, warranty, and training function
- current service situation	- Service advice and warranty
- Training perspective	- Training needs
- Centralized spare part store	- Kind of service centre
- Outlook and layout of spare part store	- Changing the present outlook
- Extranet; function and content	
- Opening hours for service centre	

3.2 Survey through questionnaires

Table 3 illustrates the data collection by means of a questionnaire. Five KESLA dealers were chosen to respond for the survey amongst which are dealers in France, Germany and Finland. As can be seen on Table 3, I received three responses from the respondents amounting to 60% participation. The questionnaires were translated into French, Finnish and Russian although the participation of the Russian customers was insignificant. See appendix 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

The data was analyzed based on the information provided by three KESLA dealers and four KESLA employees. The total number of participants represented in this survey was seven not very significant to generalize the result, but much of the information could help the company to make decisions.

3.3 Reliability and validity

Qualitative study applies a naturalistic approach that tries to understand facts in context-specific settings, such as real world situations where the researcher does not attempt to influence the facts of interest. The results in this kind of research are achieved not by

means of any statistical procedures or some kind of quantification as it appears in quantitative research (cf. Golafshani 2003, 600) It is therefore hard to measure the reliability and validity of a qualitative research. However, the researcher has to verify that the information collected for the study is trustworthy and credible. The trustworthiness of a qualitative study is best judged by the researcher considering the interviews and the observations that were made.

The empirical information for this study came from two different groups of stakeholders involve with the KESLA business. These groups were on the one hand KESLA employees and on the other hand KESLA dealers and customers. The credibility of the study is hence measured based on the interest and the understanding the respondents had on the phenomena. The employees were more involved, organized and at the same time provided consistent responses. They were eager to see some structures in the company changed. For this reason the author judged their responses credible and could be relied on. Amongst the four employees interviewed, only the CEO sounded innocent about the phenomena. The author concluded that it may be because he is the major decision maker in the company and preferred the lower employees to air their ideas which might have been difficult to go through.

KESLA dealers and customers as another group of respondents were reluctant to respond to the questionnaires. The lack of interest and the nature of responses provided only after a repeated call raise doubts on its trustfulness. However, some of the information could be useful since there was no statistical analysis of the data. Answers from individual questions like the “Extranet, its function and content” could be considered valid.

Regarding the limitations of this study, the results cannot be generalized to represent or apply to the whole population. The number of respondents that represented the KESLA customer data base where negligible to conclude that the results could be applicable to a whole. Most of the customers are geographically far away from Finland, hence had made it difficult to contact. Those that were chosen around Europe did not show enough concern.

Even though the results of this study cannot be generalized as such, they point out that there are services that worth upgrading. It was noted that the means through which the company distributes information is not efficient.

4 RESULTS

This research addresses the research question “What kind of customer service centre should KESLA have?” This question is discussed on the bases of the three sub-questions supporting the research and the main themes uncovered by the data. Therefore, this section summarises the points gathered from both sources of data collection, the questionnaires and the interviews. The main results are represented on two sections as responses of the company’s employees and responses of the dealers

4.1 Data summary

Question 1: Before now, that you want to set up a service centre how did you previously serve your customers?

We are servicing from two places, in Joensuu and Kesälahti. There are service personnel in both units.

Question 2. How have you been training your customers and dealers?

We do not have a specific place for training. We need a fixed place. We go to dealers to train them. We do it on dealers call. We also train in Kesla premises. We provide lectures that are end user-training. Training materials have to be chronological with good rules and keep to the rules.

Question 3. Kesla is moving its spare part department from Kesälahti to Joensuu. Why is it important to have a centralised spare part supply?

Customers can not understand why they have to wait for our internal transport if they order parts for Kesla products. No overlapping part needs in two stores. Easier to make analyzes and manage store. It is very likely that none of the Kesälahti spare part men will come here along with parts, huge risk for part sales because there are no substitutes for present spare part men with product knowledge for 25 years. It is also important for some parts to be in Kesälahti because customers also visit there. They need to pick some parts.

Question 4. Kesla spart part store: Suggest ideas about the outlook and layout?

It needs enough space for the parts. Separate service area, training facilities, and make it resembles a businesslike spare part sales premises. It will be very hard task to make all fit to present building and make it look like a proper after sales center. We should use our brand colours if possible, gives professional expression. Joen Loka example vehicle shed, clothing, vehicles etc. (Sewers, drains, “dirty jobs”).

Question 5. Do you have an extranet before? If yes, what are its functions, its content?

No, we have mediajemma. It is only a way to distribute data. It has no interactive functions Our customers have been calling and using e-mails. It is not effective. There are no competent people to care for an extranetContent of a possible extranet: to contain documents of the products.

Question 6. How do you think the opening hours for Kesla’s service centre could be organised?

24 hours per 7days. This is how it has been done before. It is better the working hours are from 7am to 6pm It seems like no one at after sales service would like to be working e.g. from 12 to 20. The employer has the right to define working hours for employees. (Change for reduced motivation.) The employer will need more workers if they want to have opening hours from 7 – 20. If dealers have enough knowhow they will not call back. There is need for CD-Rooms with instructions. Before now we have only e-mails which is not functioning. With an extranet environment, we can solve all problems.

Question 7. Service advice, warranty need to be changed. What is your opinion?

The present tools for warranty processing are inadequate. Unfortunately almost everybody seems to be processing warranties with their own methods. All should have same processing method and all should have same rules when making warranty decisions. The dealers and customers should commit to new warranty terms. Shared e-mails have been useful. We repair free for good customers after warranty have expired. Information is hard to reach the end customer. How should we make the end customer get the right information in time?

Question 8. Training needs for Kesla products, new product info. Could you suggest training methods?

Product information at extranet should be put in good use, hoping more support from research & development department. They make great service bulletins if they have time. It is easier for all of us if customers can get their training material and product info from extranet. We do not have training for new products i.e. employee training. It also possible to give training during trade fares. The customers and dealers could be trained the sametime.

Question 9. Should the training premises have special devices? Could you give some examples and say something about their functions.

Control simulators for harvesters, chippers and cranes. We could have small cranes and loaders to use during training sessions. A self-rotating shelf can reduce space. Trolleys could be placed on the ceiling to lift heavy parts. The shop area should be separated from spare parts.

Question 10. Kesla aims to animate its after sales centre with for example Spin-off products. Here, there is lack of competence. Suggest!

Take away items such as glass cleaners and tire chains could be displayed for truck drivers. Toys for kids; similar to machines so that customers could get for their kids. The toys could also be sold to customers. These items need a proper shop area for better display. Repair cloths with Kesla logo should be made available to customers.

Question 11. Kesla has a spare part store which looks like a warehouse. What potential attributes could be included to change the present outlook?

The entrance & sales room should be separated from store and we should use brand colors in decoration. The outlook should look fresh and modern.

Table 2. Responses of dealers

Questions	Respondent	Respondent	Respondent
	1	2	3
No of years as distributor	16	Less than 1yr	3
No of visits to Kesla premises	2	0	1
On-site training	No	No	No
Service perception	Good	Fair	Excellent
What you like to see improved	Training	Respond time, Information. Material via extranet	Better info on hours of work
Advice on the kind of customer service centre	It is ok	Train trainers to train dealers	It looks complete
Spare part store: suggestions on outlook	No answer	For domestic customer: A counter with work spots. For outside customer ∴ People to support them, timely delivery and acceptable cost	Improve quote, support of shipment of spare part express, timely shipment
Suggestions on opening hours	No answer	7.30 EET- 15.30 EET	Present opening hours are good
Extranet: Function & content	No answer	Spare part catalogue, Parts information, Warranty handling, parts pricing, Marketing material, Drawings for cranes and 3-D Models, training material, and repair instructions.	Provide access code
Training with demo devices	It's excellent	Use computer simulation	Apply Computer systems
Warranty service	It's good	No comment	Appreciation
Ananimating eg, spin-off products	It's good	Merchandizing is important	Provide take-a way accessories

4.2 Spare parts sales

KESLA's current service business has been done in two separate places, Joensuu and Kesälahti. Customers contact service personnel depending on the product and where it is produced or located. The survey indicated that the current service situation functions well. However, there is an issue of creating more space that would accommodate all spare parts that would eventually come from Kesälahti to Joensuu. The spare part service personnel who work in Kesälahti, where most of the parts are produced, will need to move to Joensuu to enhance the work force, for the reason that Joensuu has not got the qualified personnel to deal with the products that need years of experience.

4.3 Centralised spare part store

The idea to centralize spare parts in one place comes with advantages and disadvantages. KESLA produces more products in Kesälahti than in Joensuu and most of the spare parts are also produced in Kesälahti. It is understood that a delivering consignment from Joensuu would reduce the time that customers should have to wait longer days to receive their delivery. The transport route goes via the airport is in Joensuu. On the other hand the system can cost delays. Furthermore, it would be easier to make analyses and manage the store coupled with easy packaging in a central place. Notwithstanding these few advantages, internal transport must be taken into consideration. The concern lies with the distance between the two facilities. Kesälahti stretches about 100 kilometers from Joensuu. The distance effect would mean that more resources are needed to overcome the obstacle of time constraints.

The imperative for adopting a centralised spare part store was driven by three main arguments: internal transport, enough qualify personnel specialised on spare parts and the concept of space. There are numerous benefits related to having parts in a single place and in Joensuu in particular, which is closer to transport points. Another benefit would be better management and the easy packaging of products. There is the need to weigh the difference between moving products from one facility to the other, as time is concerned so as to timely meet up with customer delivery. This factor is important because when customers have to wait for one or two days for consignments to arrive, they turn to rely on express shipping, with its difficult to justify prices.

A centralised spare part store requires enough people that would be able to deal with the store. This requirement demands that KESLA workers who have managed this stock in Kesälahti would have to move to Joensuu or other persons would be trained to perform those functions. This issue of qualified personnel proved to be relevant in this survey and KESLA therefore should make sure that those who have the product knowledge move to Joensuu together or there will be drawbacks in this domain.

The concept of space in relation to spare parts store states that more products, more space to accommodate. More so, the space at KESLA customer service centre pertains to three aspects; firstly, space for parts, secondly, space for customer service and lastly space for training. The present facility does not have the capacity to inhabit the bulk of parts eventually coming from Kesälahti, nor does it have the capacity for the other needs of customer service. However, a change in the outlook of the store which will be discussed later in the proceeding paragraphs would give a different image to the KESLA brand.

4.4 Outlook and layout of spare part store

The main aim of this theme is to identify how feasible a change in the look and layout of KESLA's after sales centre could be so that it would more so resembles a proper, modern shop. According to the findings, the centre should look clean and painted with colours reflecting KESLA's image. There should be something for customers to identify the centre when they are coming in. Examples of such displays could be posters carrying the company's brand colours and images of products. I would like to cite car dealers as an example in this case. Their service centres depict what they offer, and the design of their service centres acts as an attractive factor for customers. Hence, it gives professional expression for the company.

A change in the layout of shelves was also investigated. When the data was analysed, I discovered that the space of the present centre is not enough to handle the capacity of parts; however, a couple of ideas arose from the findings that an electronic shelf is needed to gain more space in the facility. An electronic shelf could be self-rotating, but the parts would be hidden from customers. A trolley was envisaged to be placed on the ceiling such that it helps to lift heavy parts. In addition to the layout structure, shelves could be in the form of counters with work spots behind.

4.5 Training environment and training needs

The training of dealers for KESLA's products has been done in two ways: training domestic dealers and dealers abroad on call. This means that the trainee demands or creates a training need before KESLA initiates a program to provide the necessary training. However, it has worked well, as no dealer complains about insufficient training. Despite the stable situation, the minds of the dealers and customers still need motivation, and to create this improving the training needs to happen. A trainee might show that she/he understood the lectures, but the trainer must also perceive the success of the training. That is being able to evaluate how much trainees have learnt. Successful teaching and learning depends on the tools that are available to facilitate the process. In this area KESLA must modify the learning environment for its client. As the literature explains (see chapter 2.1), the concept of a training place is a facility that a company develops specifically for the purpose of training its dealers as well as employees. The design of this kind of facility has to meet the need that is some devices which act like aid tools would play a significant role in demonstrating to learners what would happen in real life situations.

This theme reveals the training needs of customers by suggesting some training methods and differentiating between training local customers and customers abroad. During this study, two training needs were uncovered: [1] when new products are developed, and [2] when customers need further training.

This research sees customer training at KESLA's premises as mainly for domestic customers. Among the three foreign dealers who responded to the questionnaire, only one has visited KESLA's facility more than once. After working with KESLA for sixteen years, the dealer has been able to visit KESLA two times. The second dealer who has been to KESLA one time is a partner for three years ago. None of these dealers received training at the premises, leading to a conclusion that, a training facility is mainly for domestic customers as well as for employees, without which there is no need to create a training environment. Before I go further to suggest some training methods that surfaced from this survey, it would be important to mention that trade fares and exhibitions improve training dealers abroad. In this case dealers and customers could be trained at the same time.

Training requires planning and the development of training materials to support the learning process. It also needs an environment conducive to sending an image of professionalism and seriousness to the learner. To continue, this environment has to be equipped with the necessary tools that would facilitate the learning ability of the learner. Another important resource or tool in factual terms entails equipping trainers that would further equip the trainee. Therefore, KESLA should make available competent personnel with product knowledge who can adhere to rules and modalities set to convey effective training to dealers. To be concise, train the trainer to train the dealer.

4.6 Opening hours

There were varying opinions about the operating hours of KESLA's service centre. The differences in world time zones create difficulties in managing opening hours. Those dealers in Europe preferred 7.30 Eastern European Time (EET) to 15.30 EET, while internal employee thought that the employer should define the opening hours. Although suggestions came up, for example 7 am to 8 pm, and 7 am to 4 pm, I recommend that the opening time for this should consider customers in Asia as well as in North and South America before setting any working hours. Moreover, to compromise the opening time with the different customers around the world, KESLA could increase service personnel, so that someone will be available all round the clock to answer the customers. Other working methods could also be developed, for example working at home. However, opening hours did not seem to be important to the respondent. Notwithstanding the respondent's lack of concern about this point, it is still necessary to investigate further.

4.7 Extranet, its function and content

This survey discovered that an extranet environment is a vital medium to circulate information linking all partners involved in the value chain of business. There are other forms of distributing information, however, an extranet proved to be the most favoured in this survey. About 85% of the respondents gave encouraging comments about the effectiveness of using extranet technology to improve customer service, as well as suggestions about its function and contents. Apart from the structure of the technology, there is a call for competent persons to manage the system, without which it would not serve the purpose. The content of an extranet could be explained as follows:

- Multifunctional and active
- Product service information
- Placing orders; customers would be able to see what is in stock
- Information about when a dealer has sold a machine
- Learning materials and instructions of product usage,
- Spare parts catalog
- Drawing for cranes and 3-D Models
- Spare parts pricing
- Service information, such as training materials and repair instructions
- Access codes to dealer

The functions of an extranet include:

-Sales and marketing: extranet can give up-to-date information to sales representatives around the world. This can entail product specifications and prices, sales leads, competitive analyses, and more. Likewise, marketing people can distribute announcements, ads, and other publicity material to current and potential buyers.

-Product development: Customers and others can give feedback on products' strengths and weaknesses and submit a wish list of enhancements. By putting product designs and specifics on an extranet, one can help clients move their products to market, too.

-Customer service and support: here, E-mail and newsgroups can provide more direct contact with the buying public—not only what they think about the products and services, but their opinions on the corporate policies and industry trends. One can alert team members and users to product changes or solutions to frequently asked questions.

4.8 Service advice and warranty claims

This section analyses how advice could be provided to customers. The first prerequisite for advising clients is to know one's business and the nature of complain that are likely to be encountered. The second step is making sure that personnel are trained so they would be responsible to deal with those problems when they occur. The last step is determining how the advice would reach the customer. The following points highlight the functions of a customer service personnel that can effectively deal with clients complains. These points were summarized from the views of Weidner Achim. (personal communication, Sept. 21, 2010).

- **Promptness:** When someone has an issue with the company, address it quickly. Promptness goes a long way in letting customers know you truly care about their business.
- **Listen:** Many times clients do not want anything fixed; they just want to say what happened. Let them talk and express their feelings and they will leave more contented.
- **Understanding the customer:** Diagnose before prescribing. Let your customer share her side of the story before asking what it can be done to fix the situation.
- **Sending a note:** In this era of information technology, investing few minutes after resolving an issue will make a lasting impression for the customer.
- **Never make excuses:** The last thing a client wants to hear is why it happened. The customer only cares about what is going to be done to resolve the issue. Keep this in mind, and choose the responses carefully because any sign of arrogant language will begin to tilt the customer's mind in search of another supplier.
- **Think long-term:** Remember the objective is for clients to continue doing business with the company. Use their complaints as an opportunity to serve them with the unexpected response.
- **Apologize:** Sometimes all a customer wants is to understand that there are regrets for whatever happened. When apologies are sent to the customers, it is easier for anger to be diffused.
- **Ask:** After allowing customers to voice their displeasure, ask what they would like to be done. They may not want much, and for minimal reparations the relationship can be saved.
- **Do it yourself:** Clients never want to be contacted by someone without power to resolve situations. Do not dodge discomfort. Step up and handle complaints yourself (cf. Handler 2010).

Before customer service personnel take the above points into consideration, all necessary instructions have to be provided to the customer through the dealer. The instructions for example could be included in the training section of the extranet or make available training materials in a CD-Rom well detailed, easy for users to understand. This strategy would limit the number of calls previously made by customers to KESLA.

Respondents in this survey indicated that information is hard to reach for the end consumer. The consequence was that customers constantly callback to service personnel

to get whatever information they need. A question raised here was “how should we make end customers get the right information”? Suggested ideas were that KESLA could stay as a manufacturer and deal directly with its dealers and give them all the support. It would be cost effective to have in the same country one strong and neutral partner who will build and control the dealer and service network. It might allow keeping the markets under control and staying on top.

4.9 Animating the service centre

The aim to decorate a service environment is to provide a comfortable atmosphere for the visitor. In a service centre of a manufacturing company, decoration materials should be directly related to the type of products manufactured by that company. Moreover, decoration materials include also things that could make the consumer feels he belongs to the company. The consumer will be internally satisfied when his family uses a glass cleaner with the KESLA logo. Truck drivers could be offered tire chains or glass wipers so that it facilitates their movement in the forest where the roads maybe difficult for the trucks to plough

5 CONCLUSION

This part recaps the results of the study and suggests what is most relevant for KESLA to implement in its after sales development. In addition, it includes recommendations for further investigations as well as conclusions. It also outlines some advantages and disadvantages of actions that the author thinks are relevant for the company.

The main aim of this study was to investigate about what kind of customer service centre KESLA should have. Furthermore, were there any possibilities in improving on the present status of after sales delivery? What are the future prospects of the after sales service?

The main points to mention from the results of this survey are: [1] Moving spare parts from Kesälahti to Joensuu.

The advantages are:

- Easy management
- Nearer to transport points
- Reduction in delivery time

Disadvantages:

- Management of internal delivery from Kesälahti to Joensuu
- Relocating of service personnel with spare parts knowledge from Kesälahti to Joensuu.
- Some customers also visit Kesälahti; there is a need to keep some parts in Kesälahti.

Challenges:

- There might be a need to train more service personnel or employ more people with technical background and consequently train them.
- Managing the available space so that it can accommodate the services of spare parts, training and demonstrations.

[2] Figure 5 shows that KESLA could concentrate on one strong partner abroad and give them the power to control the network of customers. It would be easier to manage one dealer than a couple of them in one country. This is beneficial in those countries which are very far away from Finland. The contrary can happen in the domestic market,

Finland. There can be numerous dealers in Finland and individual customers as well. It is seen that they can easily visit to KESLA to receive whatever solution they would need.

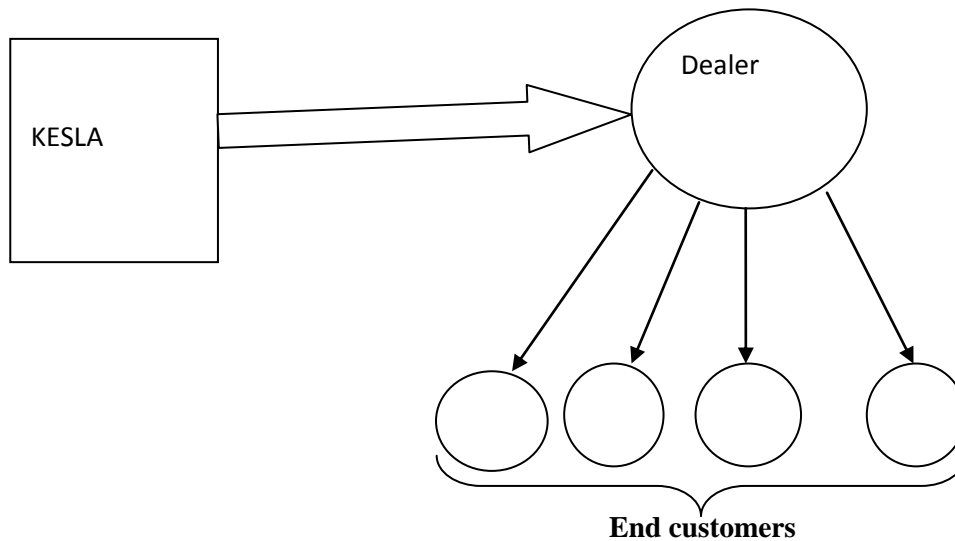


Figure 5. Delivery of after sales service abroad.

[3] Customer support should centre on improved system response time. The support system often reacts slowly to equipment failures. Providing additional service technicians, moving them closer to customers or even moving them on-site, and filling orders for emergency parts more rapidly will increase service response. This study raises several issues that might be addressed in future research.

Firstly, it would be vital to investigate the benefits of having a single dealer in one country that could act as a sole representative of KESLA. According to Weidner Achim (personal communication, Sept. 21 2010), it takes more resources to manage many dealers in one country than one dealer. Weidner went further to justify his claim by explaining the role played by distance between Finland and other countries. It could be harder to manage competition in far away countries. Therefore, it would be easier to stay like a manufacturer and have direct contact with the dealers and give them all the support needed.

Secondly, it is vital to further examine the arrangements of opening hours in the company. The respondents in this study showed less interest on the subject opening hours for the company. Some of them indicated that the present opening hours are good while others gave no comments. The lack of concern to this point leads to a conclusion that most of KESLA's stakeholders do not understand the role played by time in the

management and distribution of customer service. The sample for this study was so small such that it is hard to understand how working hours could be arranged.

Furthermore, a more extensive study involving all KESLA dealers would be vital to undertake. In this manner customer satisfaction can be measured irrespective of the changes that might have been made to improve customer service. It is also important to conduct an internal study within the company to investigate, if a service centre is worth creating. This argument is based on the facts presented by some stakeholders within the company as well as the number of times training has been done in the KESLA premises. It would be much better to direct more resources to service customers abroad where most of them are located than investing in a structure that would not add value in customer service.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Unstructured interviews

Spare parts sales development activities:

1. Before now that you want to set up an after sales centre, how did you previously serve your customers?
2. How have you been training your customers and dealers?
3. Kesla is moving its spare part department from Kesälahti to Joensuu. Why is it important to have a centralised spare part supply?
4. Kesla spare part store: Suggest ideas about the outlook, layout.
5. Do you have an extranet before? If yes, what are its functions, its content?
6. How do you think the opening hours for Kesla's service centre could be organised?

Service Advice&warranty&training functions:

7. Service advice, warranty need to be changed. What is your opinion?
8. Training needs for Kesla products, new product info. Could you suggest training methods?
9. Should the training premises have special devices? Could you give some examples and say something about their functions.
10. Kesla aims to animate its after sales centre with for example Spin-off products. Here, there is lack of competence. Suggest!
11. Kesla has a spare part store which looks like a warehouse. What potential attributes could be included to change the present outlook

**KESLA Inc... in collaboration with the University of Applied Sciences,
Joensuu, Finland.**

Researcher: Stanley Fobugwe

E-mail.stanley.fobugwe@edu.ncp.fi

To be able to improve our customer service, we have developed an After Sales Questionnaire. The Kesla after sales questionnaire contains questions about service satisfaction. We kindly ask you to complete the questionnaire regarding the service you are receiving. We would like to thank you in advance for your highly appreciated opinion which we will use to improve the quality of our services to the benefit of you and other customers.

Respondent's Name:

Date:

Name of distributor:

Address:

City; State and Zip:

1. You have been distributing Kesla's products since:

☐ 1year ago ☐ 2years ☐ 3years ☐ 4years if not, specify

2. Have you visited the after sales center of Kesla? Or through which means have you been served?

☐ We have visited ☐ by telephone ☐ by e-mail ☐ others, specify

3. If you have visited to Kesla's after sales center. How many times?

4. Have you received on-site instruction/training?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. How did you perceive the service?

☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor

6. What would you like to see improved or added?
7. What kind of customer service center should Kesla have?
8. Do you have any other comment?
9. We are putting up a spare part store. We would like you to suggest how the outlook should look like.
10. How do you think the opening hours should be arranged?
11. Kesla also want to develop an Extranet environment for its customers. What possible function should it have? And what should be its content?
12. Kesla is setting up training premises that would include demo devices such as control systems, parker, Scales systems, and Load Master. What is your opinion?
13. How can you assess Kesla's service level now?

☐ Excellent ☐ Good ☐ Fair ☐ Poor
14. Please, evaluate Kesla's warranty service volume now and suggest possible future prospects.
15. Kesla is planning to animate its after sales facility with Spin-off products like T-shirts, toys caps and other clothes. What do you suggest?

Appendix 3

Questionnaire

KESLA Inc .. en collaboration avec l'École Professionnelle de Jonesuu, Finlande

Chercheur : Stanley Fobugwe

e-mail: stanley.fobugwe@edu.ncp.fi

Pour être en mesure d'améliorer notre service à la clientèle, nous avons développé un questionnaire de vente. Ce questionnaire comporte des questions sur la satisfaction du service. Nous vous prions de remplir le questionnaire sur le service que vous recevez. Nous tenons à vous remercier à l'avance pour votre avis très appréciée qui nous servira à améliorer la qualité de nos services au profit de vous et d'autres clients.

Nom de l'intimé : Date :

Distributeur : Adresse :

Ville, Etat et zip :

1. Depuis quand avez-vous été la distribution de produits de Kesla
☐ 1an ☐ 2ans ☐ 3ans, Si non, indiquez :
2. Avez-vous visité le centre de service après-vente de Kesla? Ou par quels moyens avez-vous été servi?
☐ Nous avons visité ☐ par téléphone ☐ par e-mail. D'autres, indiquez :
3. Si vous avez visité le centre après-vente de Kesla. Combien de fois?
4. Avez-vous reçu une formation sur place?
☐ Oui ☐ Non
5. Comment avez-vous perçu le service?

☐Excellent ☐Bon ☐ Passable ☐ Mauvais

6. Que voulez-vous voir améliorées ou ajoutées?

☐ Garantie ☐ Formation ☐ Vue d'autres, indiquez

7. Quel genre de centre de service à la clientèle Kesla devrait en avoir?

8. Avez-vous d'autres commentaires?

9. Nous mettons en place un magasin de pièces de rechange. Nous aimerions que vous suggérer la manière dont les perspectives devrait ressembler.

10. Comment pensez-vous que des heures d'ouverture devrait être organisée?

11. Kesla veut aussi développer un environnement extranet pour ses clients. Quel genre de fonction devrait-elle avoir? Et quel devrait être son contenu?

12. Kesla est mise en place d'installations de formation, qui comprennent les dispositifs de démonstration tels que les systèmes de contrôle, Parker, les systèmes de balances et de charge Master. Quel est votre avis?

13. Comment pouvez-vous évaluer le niveau de service Kesla maintenant?

☐ Excellent ☐ Bon ☐ Passable ☐ Mauvais

14. Pourvez-vous évaluer le service de garantie Kesla maintenant, et proposer des perspectives d'avenir possible!

15. Kesla envisage d'animer son installation après-vente avec des produits Spin-off comme T-shirts, jouets, casquettes et autres vêtements. Que proposez-vous?

Appendix 4

KYSELYLOMAKE

Parantaaksemme asiakaspalveluamme, olemme kehittäneet myynnin jälkeisen kyselyn. Keslan myynnin jälkeinen kysely sisältää kysymyksiä tyytyväisyydestä palveluihimme. Pyydämme teitä ystävällisesti täyttämään kyselyn koskien palvelua, jota olette saaneet. Haluaisimme kiittää teitä etukäteen arvostetusta mielipiteestänne, jota me käytämme parantaaksemme palvelumme laatua teidän ja muiden asiakkaiden eduksi.

Vastaajan nimi: Päivämäärä:

Jakelijan nimi:

Osoite: Kaupunki; maa ja postinumero:

1. Olet jaellut Keslan tuotteita viimeksi:

Vuosi sitten ☐ 2 vuotta sitten ☐ 3 vuotta sitten ☐ 4 vuotta sitten ☐ Muu, tarkenna

2. Oletko vieraillut Keslan jälleenmyyntiliikkeessä? Tai onko sinua palveltu?

☐ Olen vieraillut ☐ Puhelimitse ☐ Sähköpostilla ☐ muu, tarkenna

3. Jos olet vieraillut Keslan jälleenmyyntiliikkeessä, niin kuinka monesti?

4. Oletko saanut paikan päällä tapahtuvaa koulutusta?

☐ kyllä

☐ en

5. Millaisena koit palvelun?

☐ Erinomaisena

☐ Hyvinä

☐ Kelvollisena

☐ Huonona

6. Mitä asioita haluaisit nähdä kehitettävän/lisättävän?

7. Millainen asiakaspalvelukeskus Keslalla pitäisi olla?

8. Onko sinulla joitain muuta kommentoitavaa?
9. Olemme perustamassa varaosamyymälää. Haluaisimme sinun ehdottavan, miltä sen pitäisi näyttää.
10. Miten mielestäsi aukiolot pitäisi asetella?
11. Kesla haluaisi myös kehittää Extranet-ympäristön asikkailleen. Mitä mahdollisia toimintoja siinä pitäisi olla? Ja mikä sen sisältö pitäisi olla?
12. Kesla on perustamassa koulutustiloja, jotka sisältävät mahdollisesti demo-laitteita, kuten ohjausjärjestelmiä, vaakajärjestelmiä ja Load Masterin. Mitä mieltä olette?)
13. Millaiseksi arvioisit Keslan palvelutason nyt?
- ☐ Erinomainen
- ☐ Hyvä
- ☐ Kelvollinen
- ☐ Huono
14. Arvioi Keslan tämänhetkistä takuupalvelua ja ehdota mitä voisi parantaa tulevaisuudessa?
15. Kesla suunnittelee elävöittävänsä jälleenmyyntiään oheistuotteilla, kuten t-paidoilla, leluilla, lippiksillä ja muilla vaatteilla. Mitä ehdotatte/olette mieltä?

Appendix 5

Вопросник

Kesla Инк .. в сотрудничестве с Университетом прикладных наук, Йоэнсуу, Финляндия.

Исследователь: Stanley Fobugwe

электронная почта: Stanley.fobugwe@edu.ncp.fi

Для того, чтобы улучшить обслуживание клиентов, мы разработали Послепродажное вопросника. Kesla послепродажное анкета содержит вопросы об услуге удовлетворение. Просим Вас заполнить вопросник, касающийся услуг вы получаете. Мы хотели бы поблагодарить вас за вашу высокую оценку мнение, которое мы будем использовать для улучшения качества наших услуг на пользу вам и другим заказчикам.

Страна, город: _____ Дата _____

Пол: ☐ мужчина ☐ женщина

1. С каких это пор вы Kesla клиентов?

☐ 1 год ☐ 2 года ☐ 3 года, если не укажет _____

2. Приходилось ли вам бывать послепродажное центре Kesla? Или с помощью каких средств вы были служил?

☐ Я посетил ☐ по телефону ☐ по электронной почте, если не укажет _____

3. Получили ли Вы на месте обучение?

☐ да ☐ нет

4. Как вы восприняли услуги?

☐ Отлично ☐ Хорошо, ☐ Нормально ☐ бедные

5. Что бы вы хотели видеть улучшить или добавить?

☐ Гарантия ☐ Обучение ☐ Экстранет услуг, если не укажет _____

6. Какие центре обслуживания клиентов должны Kesla есть?

7. У вас есть какие-то другие комментарии?

8. Мы вкладываем до склада запасных части. Мы хотели бы вам предложить, как вид должен выглядеть так.

9. Как вы думаете, часы работы должны быть организованы?

☐от 8 до 16 часов ☐от 8 до 17 часов ☐от 9 до 17 часов, если не укажет -

10. Мы также хотим развивать окружающей среды экстрасети для своих клиентов. Какие возможные функции она должна иметь? А что должно быть его содержание?

11. Kesla создает подготовки помещений, которые будут включать демо-устройств, таких как системы управления, Паркер, Весы системы и загрузки мастер. Каково ваше мнение?

12. Как Вы можете оценить уровень обслуживания Kesla сейчас?

☐Отлично ☐Хорошо, ☐ Нормально ☐ бедные

13. Пожалуйста, оцените гарантийное обслуживание Kesla в настоящее время объем и предложить возможные перспективы на будущее.

14. Kesla планирует оживить его после продажи объекта с Побочные продукты, такие как футболки, игрушки колпачки и другие одежды. Что вы предлагаете?
